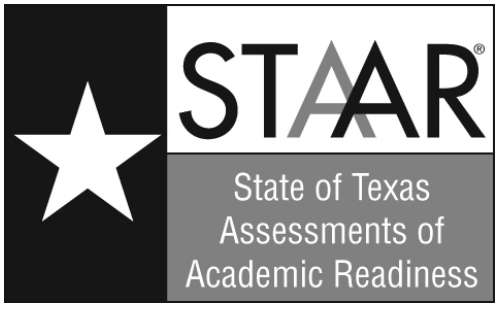
Educator Guide

to Accessibility within the STAAR Program



2018–2019

Copyright © 2018, Texas Education Agency. All rights reserved.

Table of Contents

Resources 1

Purpose of This Guide 2

Understanding STAAR Accessibility 3

Accessibility within the STAAR Program 3

Considering Paper Versus Online 6

Online Accessibility Features 7

Online Designated Supports 10

Accommodation Guidelines 17

Classroom Accommodations and the Link to Content and Language Supports 18

Special Situations for Content and Language Supports 20

Planning for Testing 21

NOTES

Resources

Online Resource Materials	
Resource materials available online	**Located at**
Accommodation Resources	https://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/accommodations/
2018–2019 District and Campus Coordinator Resources	http://txetests.com/dccr/
LPAC Resources	http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/ell/lpac/
online testing technology	http://TexasAssessment.com/administrators/technology/
STAAR Released Test Questions	http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/STAAR_Released_Test_Questions/
STAAR Resources	http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/staar/
Student Assessment Division	http://tea.texas.gov/student.assessment/

NOTES

Accommodation Resources

Purpose of This Guide

This guide is provided to familiarize educators with features and supports that make the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) accessible to all students. General information outlining the updated accommodation policy is available in this guide. In addition, specific examples of the online features and supports offered on STAAR are provided. All information in this guide, as well as additional resources about accessibility on STAAR, can be accessed online through the link in the NOTES column on this page.

Icons

The icon shown below is used throughout the guide. This icon is located in the NOTES column.

This icon indicates additional information that is available online. The text located below the icon links to specific online resources.

NOTES

Accommodation Resources

Understanding STAAR Accessibility

The goal of STAAR accessibility is to ensure that each student can interact appropriately with the content, presentation, and response modes of the state assessment. In order to meet this goal, the STAAR accessibility features and designated supports are designed to allow all test takers to demonstrate their knowledge of the content being tested without the format of the assessment, the non-tested language, or the type of response needed to answer the questions being barriers. The various features and designated supports made available on STAAR paper and online tests are also designed to be the same or similar to those accommodations commonly used during classroom instruction.

STAAR is available on paper and online as indicated for the grades and subjects listed below.

Program	Grade	Subject	Paper Available	Online Available
STAAR	3–EOC	all	√	√
STAAR Spanish	3–5	all	√	√
STAAR Alternate 2	3–EOC	all	√	

Accessibility within the STAAR Program

For STAAR and STAAR Spanish, accessibility falls into three categories: accessibility features, locally-approved designated supports, and designated supports requiring TEA approval. It is important to refer to the individual policy documents on the Accommodation Resources website for comprehensive information about the procedures and materials within each of these categories.

Accessibility Features

Accessibility features may be provided to students based on their needs. In general, these procedures and materials are available to any student who regularly benefits from their use during instruction; however, a student cannot be required to use them during testing. Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that test administrators understand the proper implementation of these procedures and use of these materials. In some cases, a student may need to complete the test in a separate setting in order to eliminate distractions to other students and to ensure that the security and confidentiality of the test are maintained.

Locally-Approved Designated Supports

Locally-approved designated supports include accommodations that may be made available to students who meet eligibility criteria. The decision should be based on the eligibility criterion and aimed at addressing a student's consistent academic struggle in a specific area even after intensive instruction and remediation. The appropriate team of people at the campus level determines eligibility as indicated in each policy document. The decision to use a designated support during a state assessment should be made on

NOTES

Accommodation Resources

an individual student basis and take into consideration the needs of the student and whether the student routinely receives the support during classroom instruction and classroom testing. This does not mean that the support must be used every day during instruction. Routine accommodation, or designated support use, as defined by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), means that the student has used the support often enough during classroom instruction and testing that he or she is able to use it independently during the state assessment. (Independent use is applicable to some designated supports [e.g., calculation aids] but not to others [e.g., oral administration].) In addition, the support has been proven to be effective in meeting the student's specific needs, as evidenced by student scores or teacher observations with and without support use.

Designated Supports Requiring TEA Approval

These designated supports require the submission of an Accommodation Request Form to TEA. The appropriate team of people at the campus level as indicated in each policy document determines whether the student meets all of the specific eligibility criteria and, if so, submits an Accommodation Request Form to TEA. Accommodation Request Forms must be received by TEA according to the posted deadlines. Late requests will **NOT** be processed unless circumstances involving the student change after the deadline (e.g., newly enrolled student, medical emergency, updated admission, review, and dismissal [ARD] committee decisions). The request must be approved by TEA before a student can use the designated support on the state assessment. This type of support must be documented in the student's paperwork as "pending TEA approval." In the event that a request is denied, the campus should be prepared to meet the student's needs with accessibility features or any of the locally-approved designated supports.

These features and supports are intended to make STAAR accessible to students for a variety of reasons. A student may take STAAR online for one subject and on paper for another, depending on appropriateness and/or accessibility. Accessibility features, locally-approved designated supports, and designated supports requiring TEA approval are available on paper and online as indicated on the next page. It is important to refer to the individual policy documents on the Accommodation Resources webpage for the applicable grade levels, subjects, and eligibility criteria.

NOTES

Accommodation Resources

	Paper	Online
Accessibility Features		
Amplification Devices	√	√
Bilingual Dictionary	√	√
Color Overlay/Color Setting	√	√*
General Reminders to Stay on Task	√	√
Highlighter, Colored Pencil, etc.	√	√*
Individual Administration	√	√
Magnifying Devices/Zoom	√	√*
Minimize Distractions (e.g., stress ball, headphones, music)	√	√
Photocopying or Enlarging Non-secure Test Materials	√	
Place Marker/Guideline	√	√*
Projection Devices	√	√
Read Aloud Writing Prompt to Student	√	√
Read Test Aloud to Self	√	√
Reading Assistance for Third Grade Math	√	√
Scratch Paper/Notes Tool/Sticky Notes	√	√*
Signing Test Directions	√	√
Small Group	√	√
Translating Test Directions	√	√
Typing Assistance for Fourth Grade Writing		√
Designated Supports		
Basic Transcribing	√	√
Braille/Refreshable Braille†	√	√*
Calculation Aids	√	√*
Content and Language Supports	√§	√*
Extra Time	√	√
Individualized Structured Reminders	√	√
Large Print	√	
Manipulating Test Materials	√	√
Mathematics Manipulatives	√	√
Oral Administration/Text-to-Speech	√	√*
Signed Administration/Signed Videos	√	√*
Spelling Assistance	√	√*
Supplemental Aids	√	√
Designated Supports Requiring TEA Approval		
Complex Transcribing	√	√
Extra Day	√	√
Mathematics Scribe	√	√
Other	√	√

* These features and supports are embedded within the online system. All other accommodations are administered independent of the online system.

† Refreshable Braille is only available on English versions of grades 3–8 reading, grades 4 and 7 writing, English I EOC, English II EOC, grade 8 social studies, and U.S. History EOC.

§ Content and Language Supports are available on paper via approval of a special request.

NOTES

Accommodation Resources

Considering Paper Versus Online

In addition to making decisions based upon individual need, due consideration should be given to the mode in which an allowed or approved designated support is offered. The mode of testing should not be documented in paperwork and can be determined closer to testing once the student has been given the opportunity to practice online. For instance, if a student requires a braille assessment in mathematics or science, then a paper form must be used. However, screen reader support for a refreshable braille display is available online for English versions of grades 3–8 reading, grades 4 and 7 writing, English I EOC, English II EOC, grade 8 social studies, and U.S. History EOC as an option for students. Some designated supports may require a student to take STAAR in a certain mode. For instance, a student eligible for content and language supports must take STAAR online, as these are embedded online supports. Paper versions of these accommodations are only available to a small population of students who cannot access technology and have a TEA-approved special administration form. Supplemental aids are an example of another type of designated supports that can be used by eligible students taking either an online or a paper test. These supports are provided locally to individual students and are not embedded into the mode of testing.

The following sections highlight those accessibility features and designated supports provided in the online system. For information about the remaining features and supports, see the appropriate policy documents located on the Accommodation Resources webpage.

Online Accessibility Features

Accessibility features are available to all students taking STAAR on paper or online. Some of these features are embedded in the online system, while others (e.g., individual administration, general reminders to stay on task) are not. The following figures describe the accessibility features embedded in the online system and provide their associated icon. These features are available on all STAAR assessments (i.e., mathematics, reading, writing, science, and social studies) and do not need to be activated in the online system.

Figure 1. Zoom

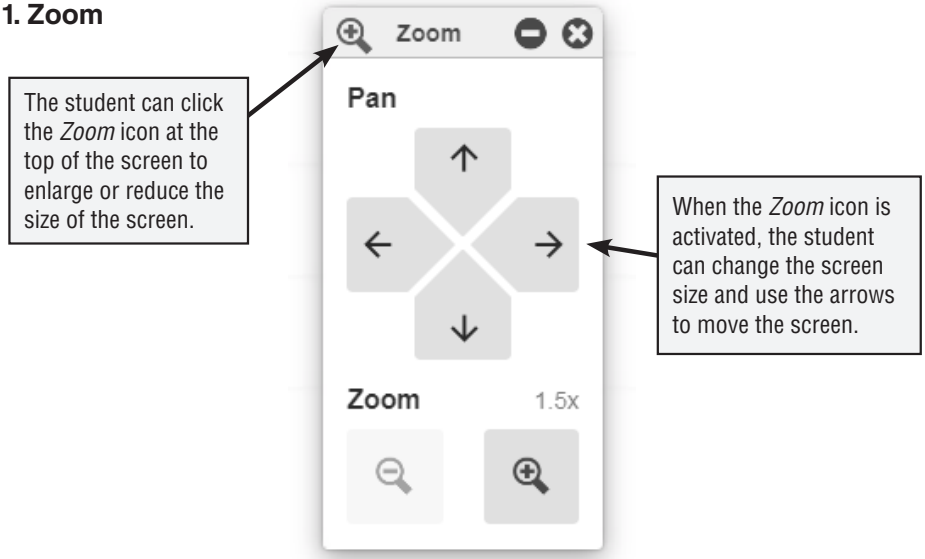
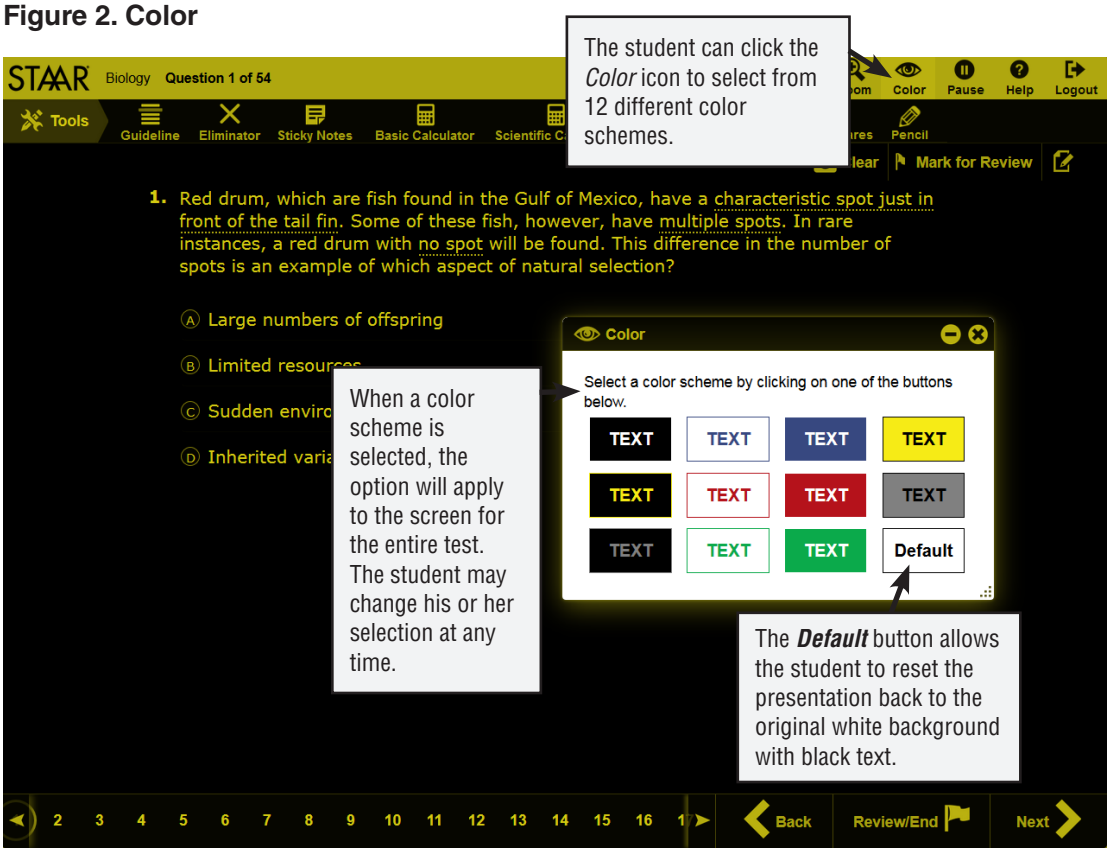


Figure 2. Color



NOTES

Figure 3. Guideline

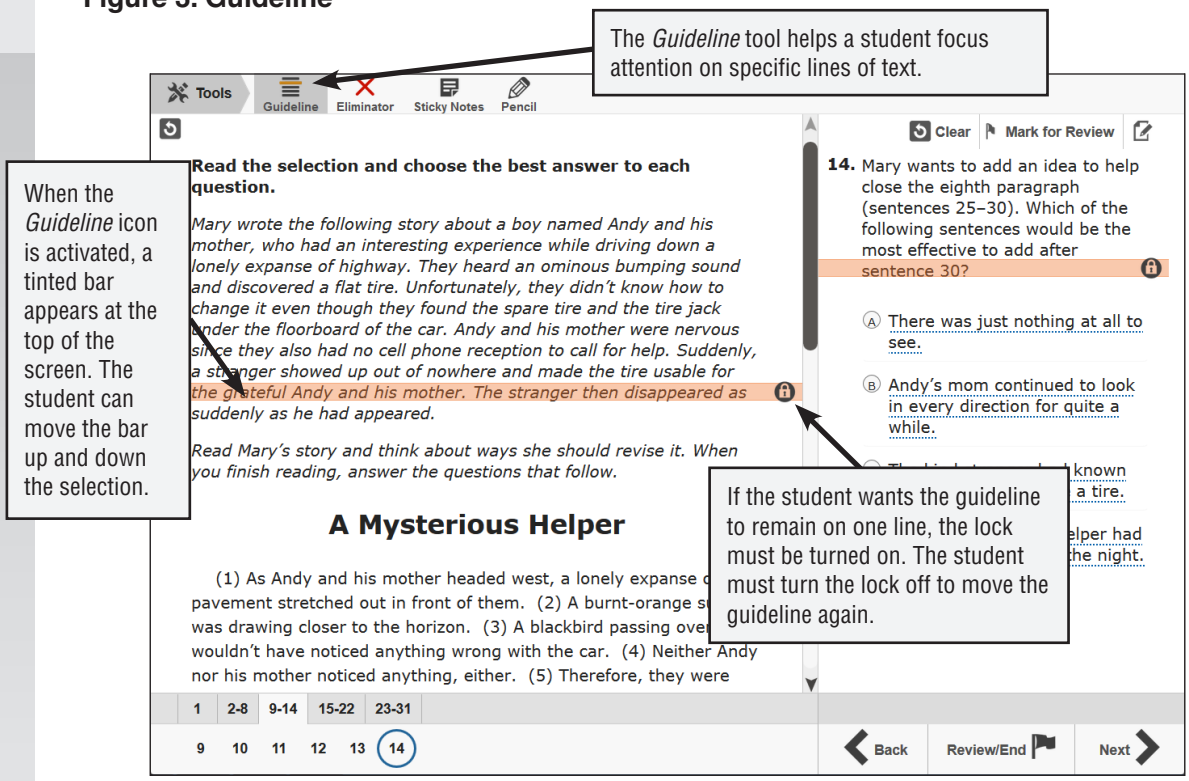


Figure 4. Highlight

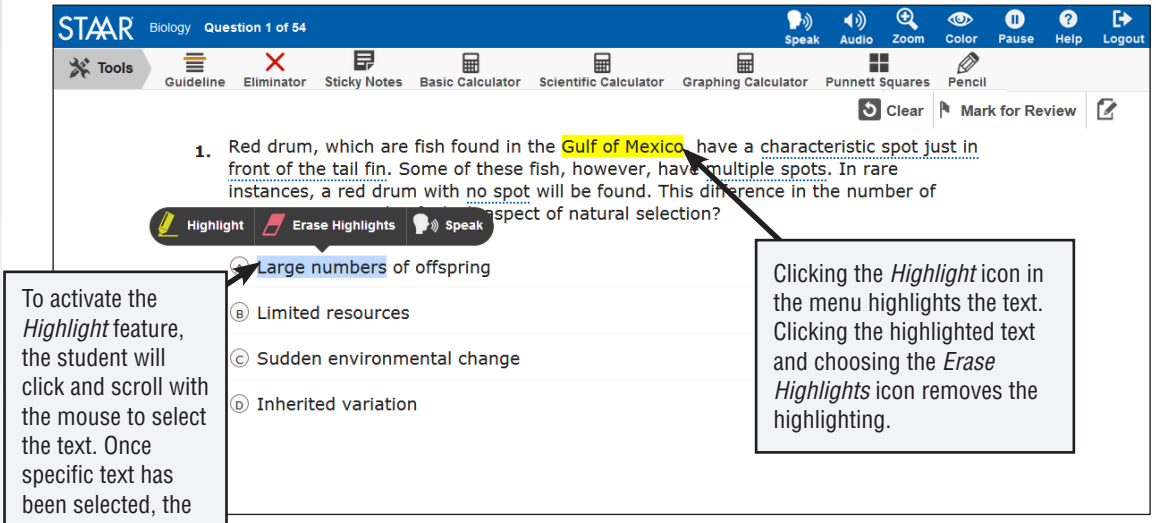


Figure 5. Pencil

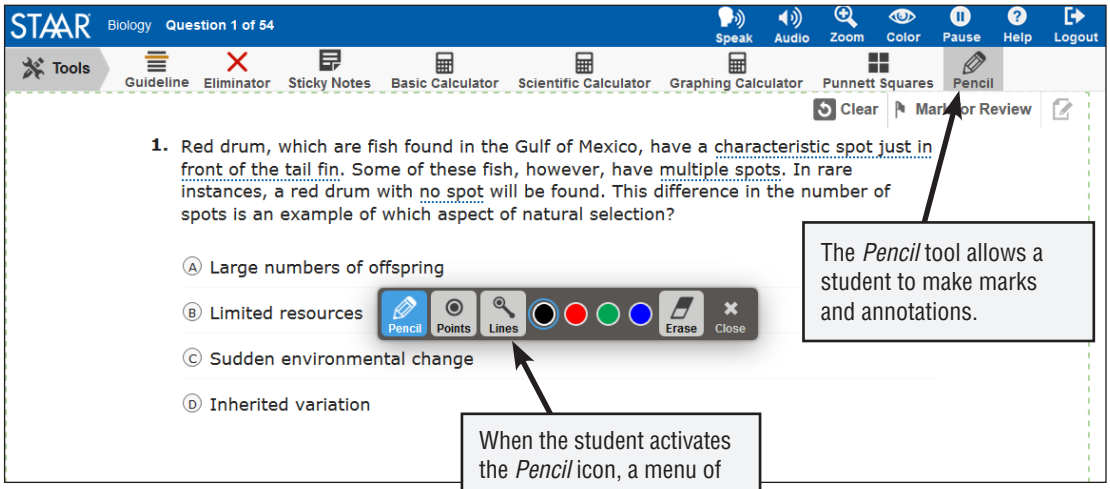
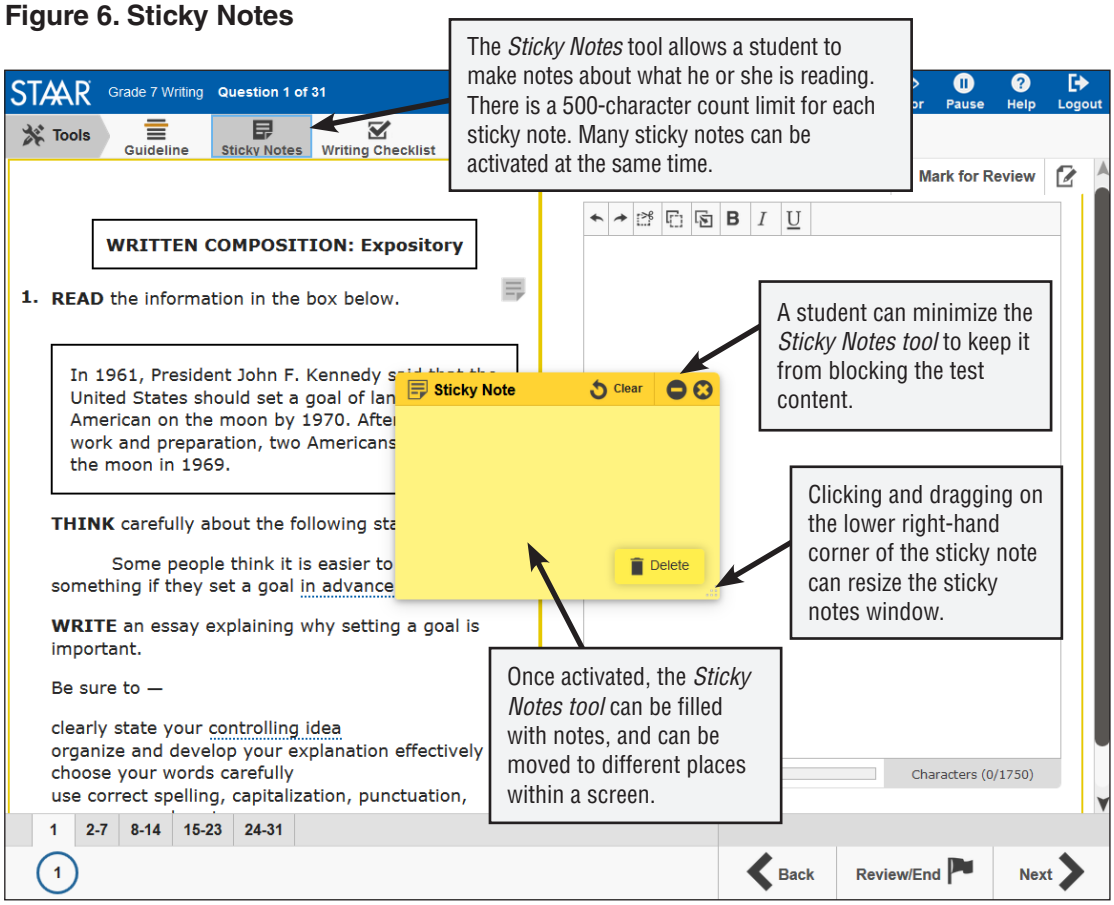


Figure 6. Sticky Notes



NOTES

Accommodation Resources

Online Designated Supports

Designated supports are available to students who meet the eligibility criteria as determined and documented by the appropriate team of people at the local level. Some of these supports are embedded in the online system, while others are not. More specific information can be found in the individual policy documents on the Accommodation Resources webpage.

Supports not embedded in the online system may be made available to students testing online as well as to those testing on paper. The test administrator will provide the support to the student on the day of the test. For instance, a student needing supplemental aids will need to use the type of assistance he or she uses in the classroom (e.g., grade-appropriate grammar and mechanics rules, mnemonic devices), as supplemental aids are not embedded into the online system.

Some designated supports that are available to students taking a paper test are also embedded online accommodations. For instance, a student needing reading support can receive an oral/signed administration of the paper test booklet from the test administrator or can take the test online using text-to-speech or ASL videos.

Content and language supports are available only as embedded online accommodations. In order to receive these supports, a student must test online. The delivery of an online assessment offers an opportunity to provide these types of supports in a standardized way to students who use similar accommodations in the classroom and find this type of assessment to be the most appropriate and accessible for them. Content and language supports have accommodations in the form of pop-ups, rollovers, supplementary materials, and prereading text. These supports are only applied to particular selections and test questions based on expert judgments about which supports are likely to make a question more accessible to students.

The following figures describe only those designated supports embedded in the online testing system.

Figure 7. Basic calculator

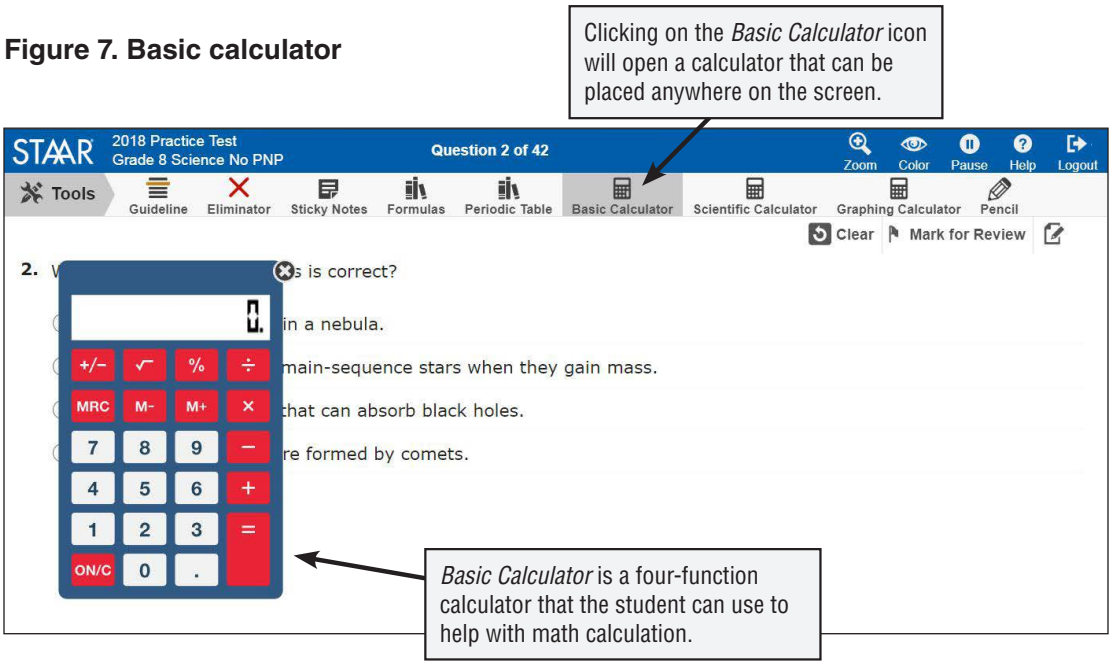


Figure 8. Text-to-speech (available in English and Spanish)

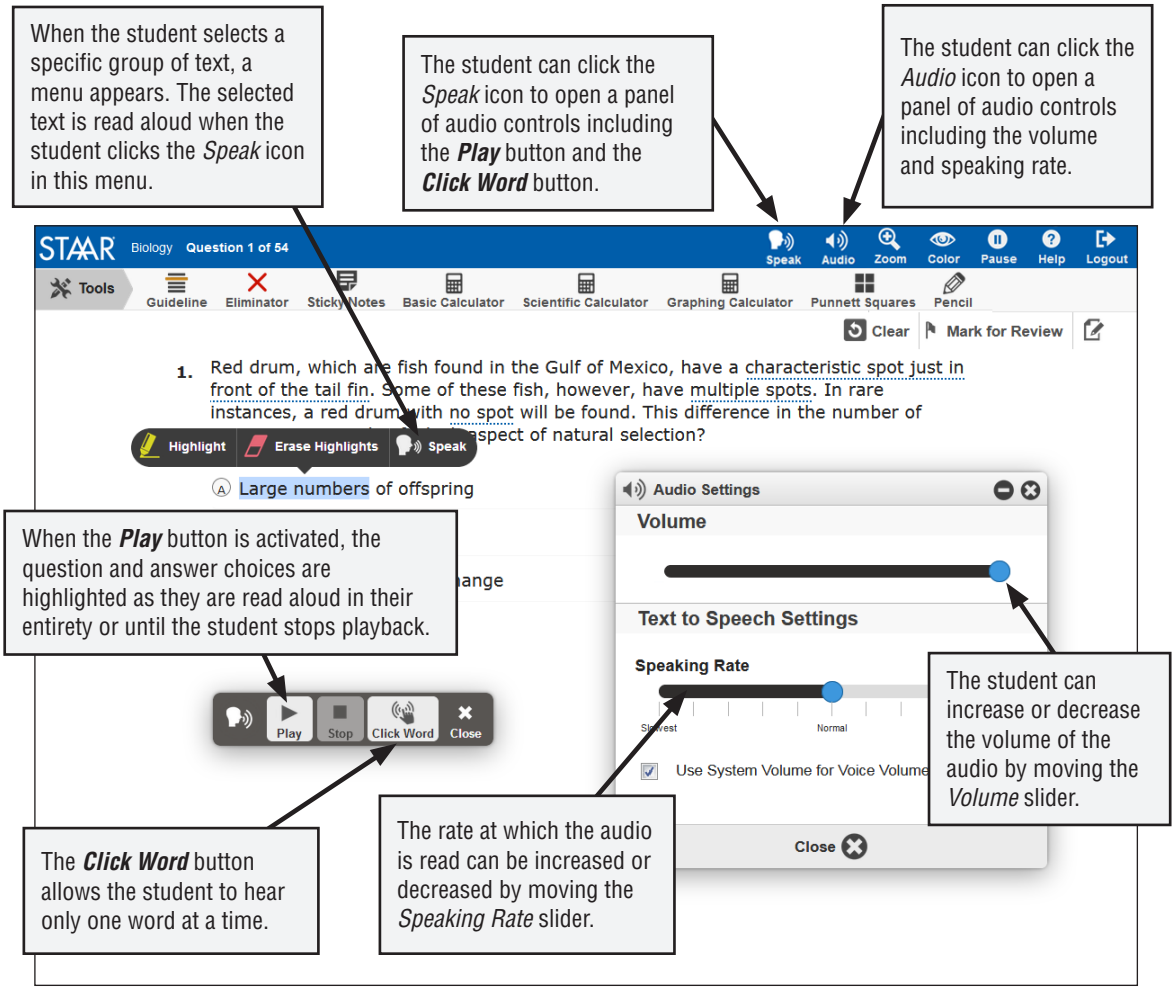
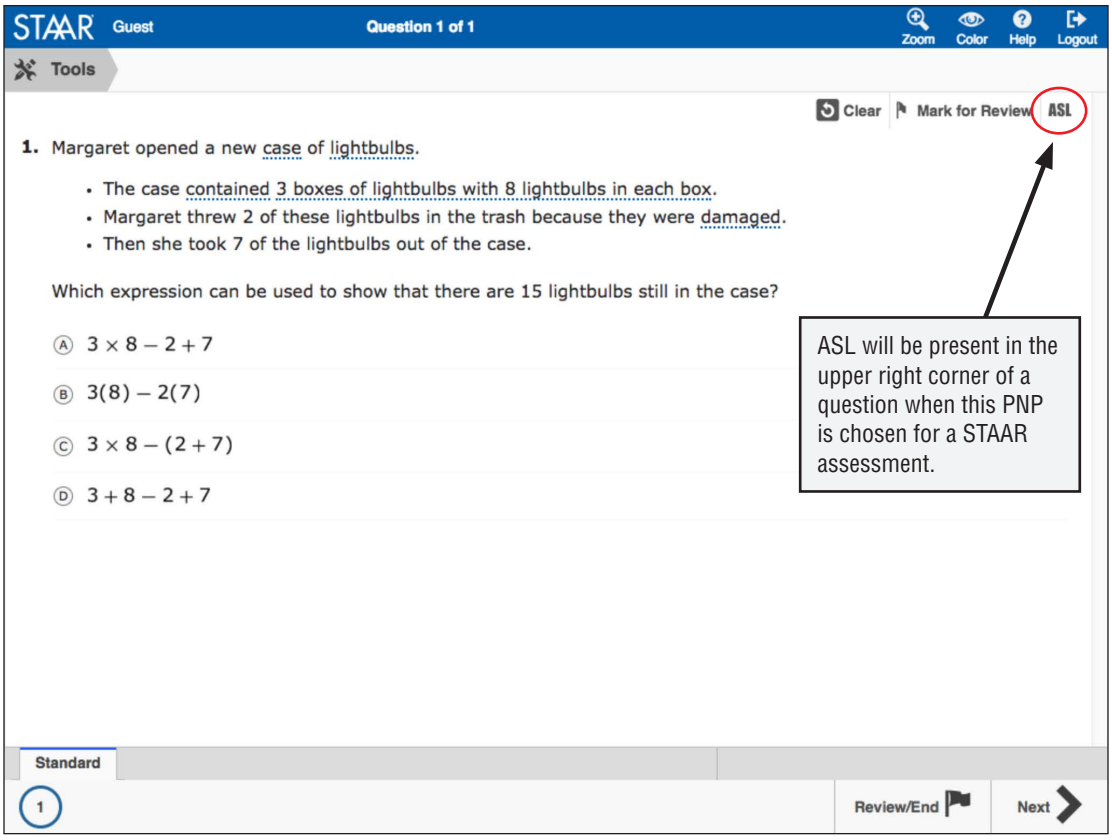


Figure 9. Signed Videos (available in English)



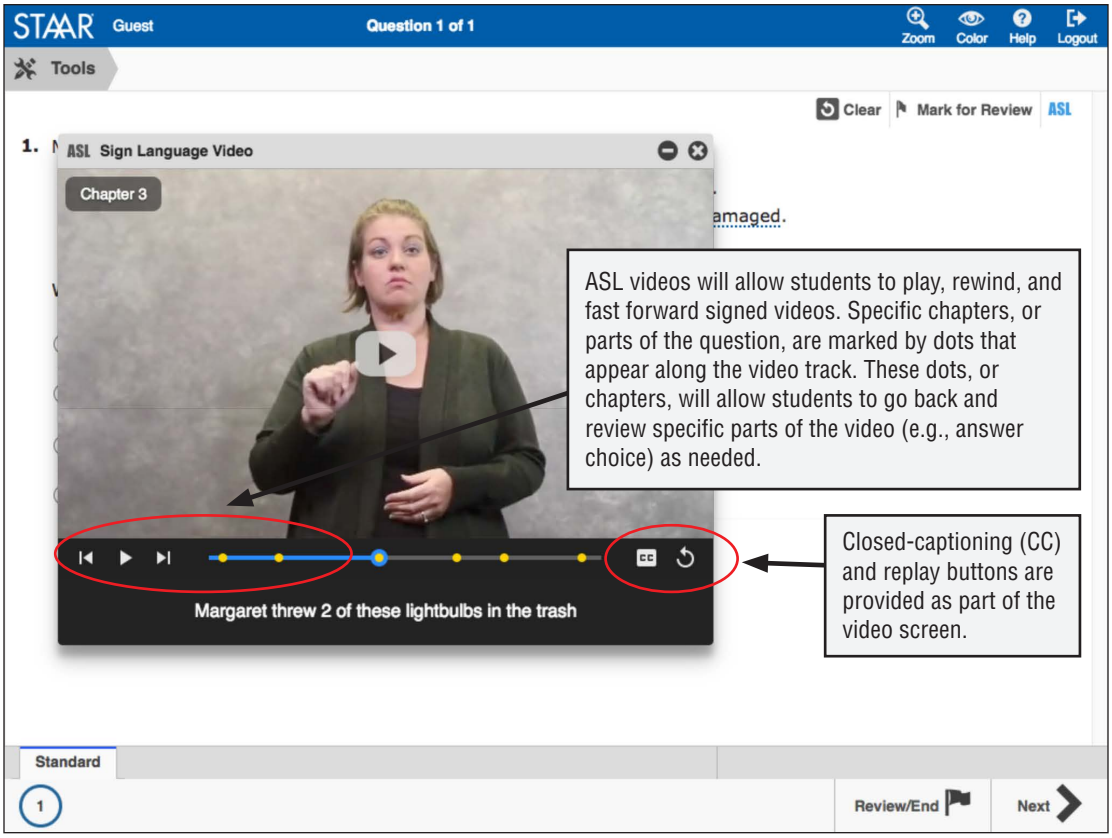


Figure 10. Pop-ups (available in English and Spanish)

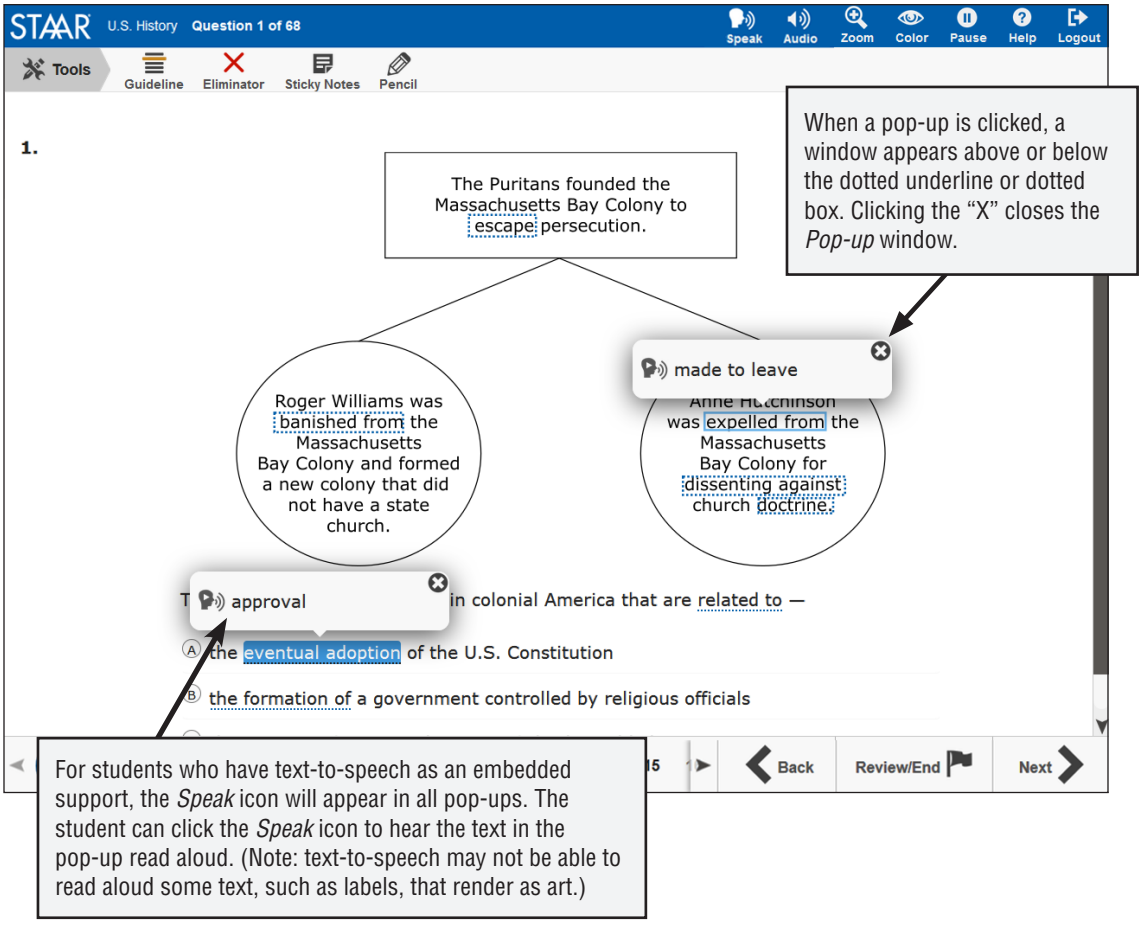


Figure 11. Rollovers (available in English and Spanish)

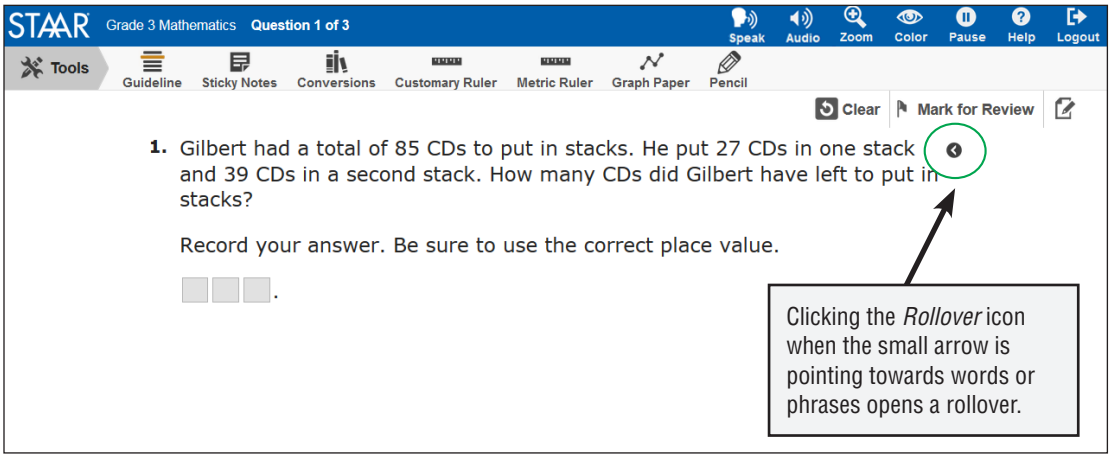


Figure 12. Rollovers (available in English and Spanish)

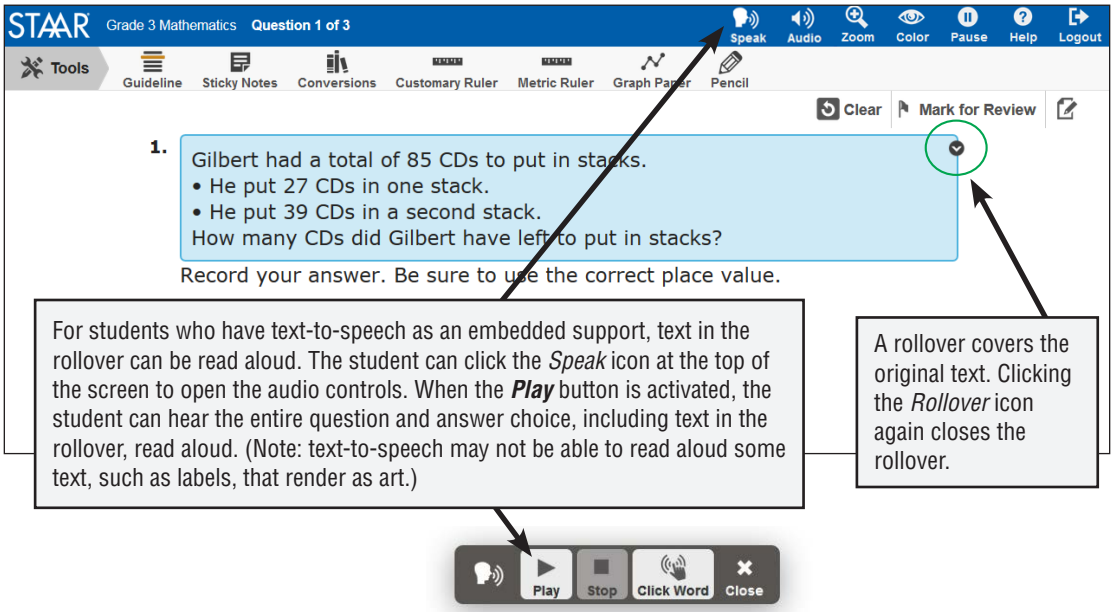


Figure 13. Additional Supports (available in English and Spanish)

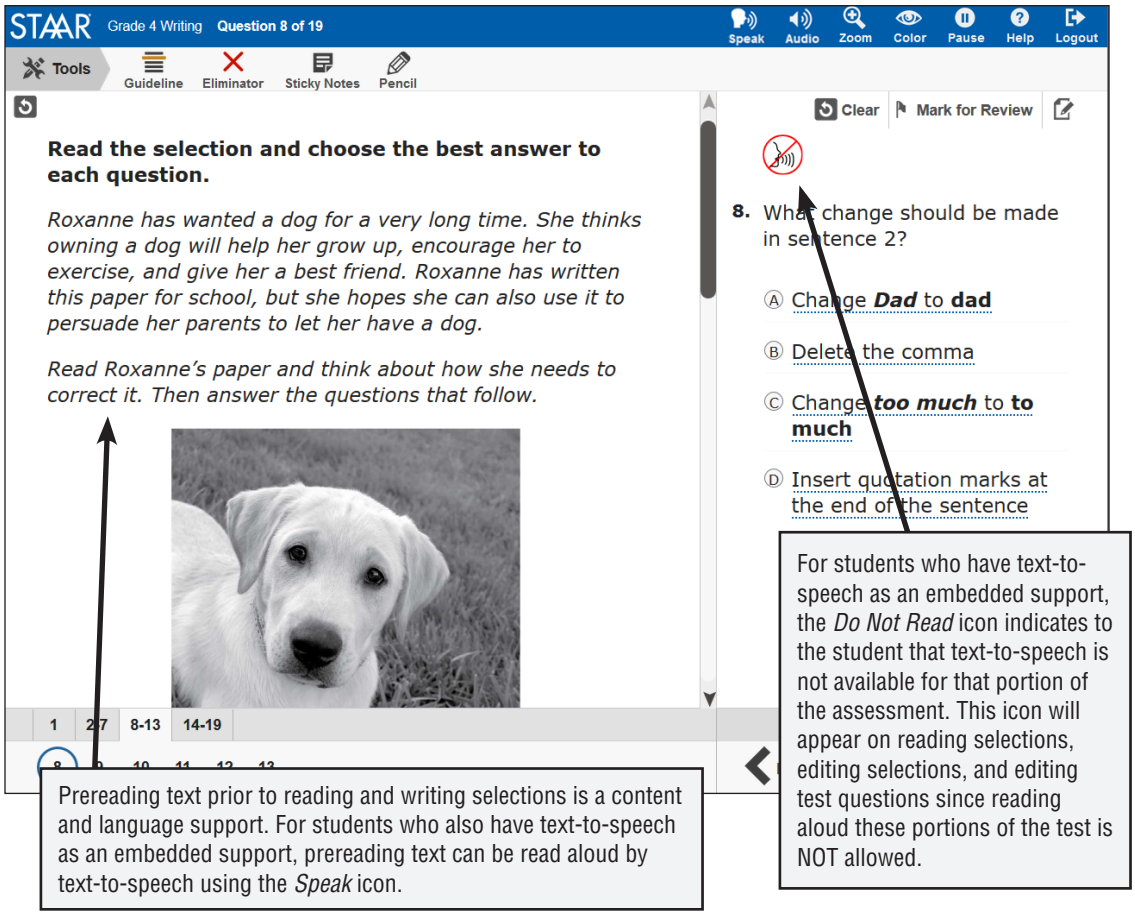
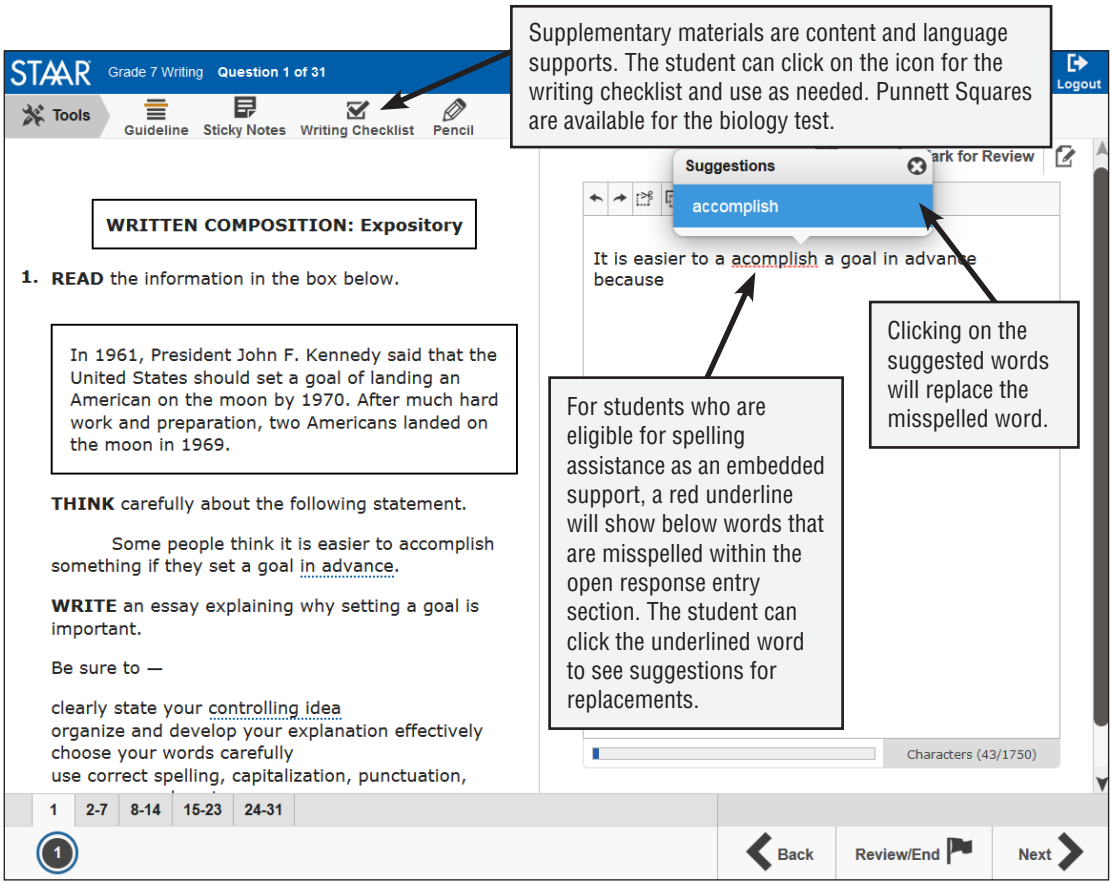
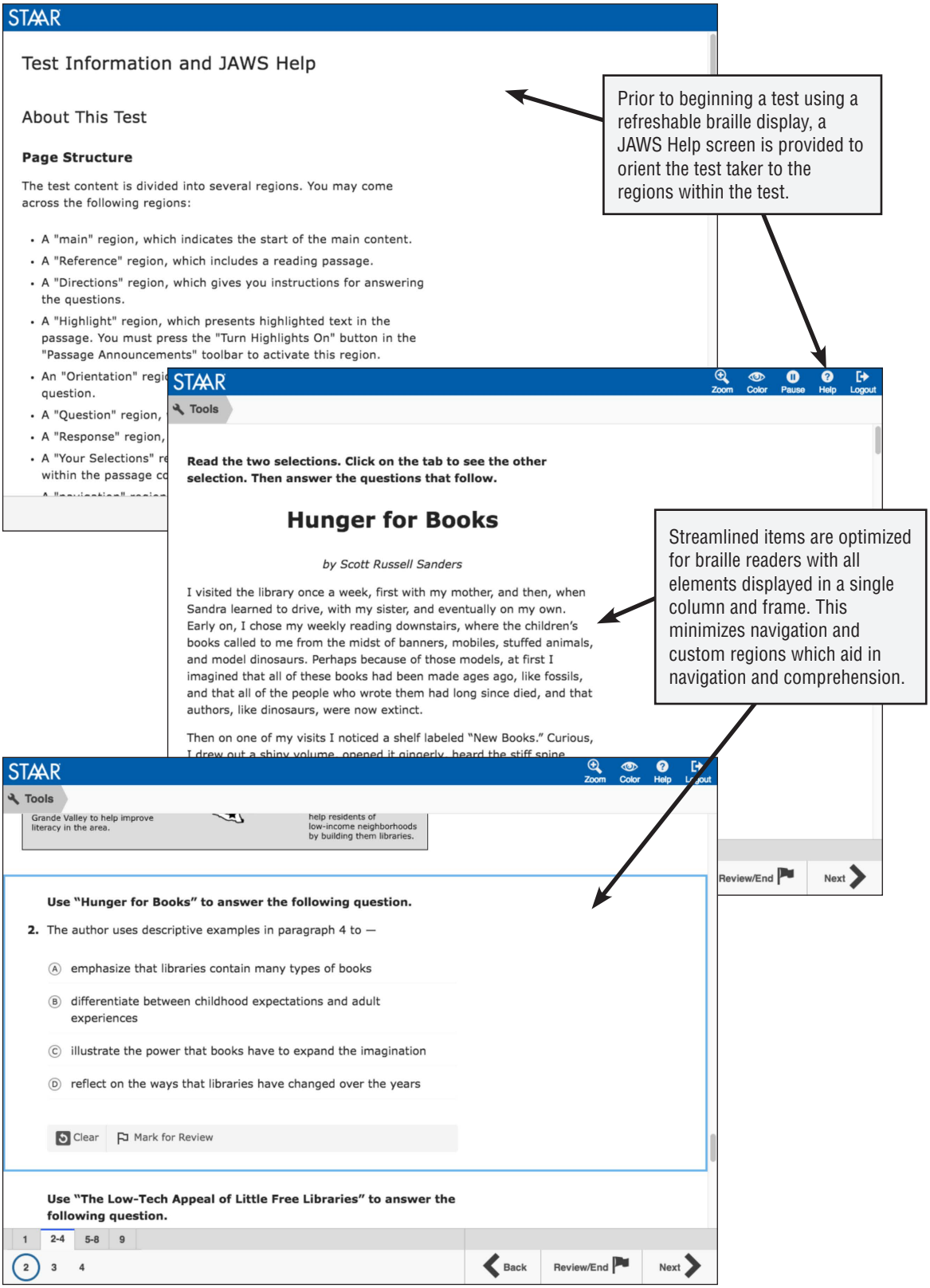


Figure 14. Spelling Assistance and Supplementary Materials (available in English and Spanish)



NOTES

Figure 15. Refreshable Braille (available on English versions of grades 3–8 reading, grades 4 and 7 writing, English I EOC, English II EOC, grade 8 social studies, and U.S. History EOC only)



NOTES

Accommodation Resources

Accommodation Guidelines

The Accommodation Guidelines specify how STAAR selections and test questions are accommodated for content and language supports. Accommodations are done in a standardized manner while maintaining the integrity of the knowledge and skills being assessed.

Content and Language Supports

These designated supports, in the form of pop-ups, rollovers, prereading text, and supplementary materials, are available on STAAR and STAAR Spanish online tests only. (They are not available for Algebra II or English III.) Although STAAR Spanish uses the same guidelines for Content and Language Supports as the English version of STAAR, some of the accommodations in the pop-ups and rollovers may not be identical due to linguistic differences.

Pop-ups:

- isolate specific information in a question that corresponds to each answer choice
- isolate specific text or information in a selection that is referenced in the question or answer choices
- isolate specific information in a graphic or list that is referenced in the question
- define literary terms
- apply an allowable supplemental aid (e.g., graphic organizer, place-value chart, t-chart, graphic of scientific concept, timeline, map) to specific questions or answer choices
- include the formula from the grade-specific Reference Materials when the question specifies the measure or conversion to be performed
- direct student attention to parts of the grade-specific Reference Materials
- provide clarifying information for a graphic organizer, political cartoon, or map
- provide a visual representation in the selection, question, answer choices, or in the writing prompt by adding graphics, photographs, or animations
- define or clarify construct-irrelevant words, phrases, and sentences using plain language, synonyms, definitions, examples, and consistent language

Rollovers:

- bullet or separate steps in a process (e.g., multi-step problem, sequence of events)
- reword complex questions or answer choices to condense text
- reorganize and simplify historical excerpts

Prereads:

- offer text prior to the selection (for grades 3–8 reading, grades 4 and 7 writing, English I, and English II only)

NOTES

Supplementary Materials:

- blank Punnett squares (Biology only)
- writing checklists (for grade 4 English and Spanish writing, grade 7 writing, English I, and English II only)

Classroom Accommodations and the Link to Content and Language Supports

The use of accommodations occurs primarily during classroom instruction as educators use various instructional strategies to meet the individual needs of each student, thus allowing each student to maximize his or her academic potential. Content and language supports available online on STAAR offer opportunities for students to meaningfully access the required state assessment.

TEA policies indicate that decisions about designated supports used during a statewide assessment should

- be made on an individual basis,
- consider the needs of the student, and
- be routinely used during classroom instruction and testing.

Although it is unlikely that students will routinely use the computer-based content and language supports during classroom instruction, they may use variations of them as illustrated in the table on the next page. This list is not exhaustive; it includes examples of classroom accommodations that may correspond to the embedded online content and language supports on STAAR.

Educators, parents, and students must understand that accommodations provided during classroom instruction and testing might differ from designated supports allowed for use on state assessments. Instruction comes first and can be customized to meet the needs of each student. Unlike instruction, state assessments are standardized to provide a reliable comparison of outcomes across all test takers. Certain accommodations used in the classroom would invalidate the content being assessed or compromise the security and integrity of the state assessment. For this reason, not all accommodations suitable for instruction are allowed during the state assessments. However, the policies for accessibility on state assessments do not limit an educator's ability to develop individualized materials and techniques to facilitate student learning.

In order to make accommodation decisions for students, educators should have knowledge of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and how a student performs in relation to them. Educators should also collect and analyze data pertaining to the use and effectiveness of accommodations (e.g., assignment/test scores with and without the accommodation, observational reports) so that informed educational decisions can be made for each student. By analyzing data, an educator can determine whether the accommodation becomes inappropriate or unnecessary over time due to the student's age or changing needs. Likewise, data can confirm for the educator that the student still struggles in certain areas and should continue to use the accommodation.

NOTES

Classroom Accommodations Examples that Link to STAAR Content and Language Supports
The teacher introduces a new book to a struggling reader prior to reading it aloud or independent reading. The topics discussed might include major concepts, difficult words, setting, characters, or prior knowledge of the subject.
Using a dictionary or thesaurus, the teacher points out the meaning or synonym of a word.
The teacher isolates specific information to focus the student on the core concept being taught.
The teacher acts out or has the students role-play newly introduced vocabulary or difficult concepts.
The teacher simplifies difficult vocabulary and then reformats complex word problems by bulleting or spacing out each step required to solve the problem.
The teacher provides the student with a specific supplemental aid (e.g., chart, table, graph, checklist, map, timeline) applicable to the question being posed, the assignment, or the task.
The teacher provides the formula(s) that is needed to solve a problem.
The teacher provides visual aids (e.g., demonstrations, photographs, art) to identify people and/or places.
The teacher provides visual aids (e.g., demonstrations, photographs, art) to define or clarify vocabulary.
During classroom discussions, the teacher clarifies or rewords complex text or questions using simpler language.
The teacher directs the student (e.g., highlight, bold, point to, flag the information) to the specific part(s) of the selection, diagram, map, or figure that is being discussed.
The teacher presents parts of a complex concept one at a time.

NOTES

Coordinator Resources

Accommodation Resources

STAAR Assessment Management System

Special Situations for Content and Language Supports

Because content and language supports are embedded accommodations presented in an online format, replicating these features in a paper or braille version is not always possible. Technology-based supports enable most students to test online; however, in instances in which the use of a support is not feasible or appropriate, or if the administration of an online test is inappropriate due to a student's particular disability, a special request may be made to TEA for approval to administer a paper test booklet. The paper administration request document can be found in the Prepare for Paper Administrations section of the *Coordinator Resources*.

For students who take a braille test, including students who use screen reader support for refreshable braille displays, and are also eligible for Content and Language Supports, a request for a paper version of STAAR with embedded supports should be submitted to TEA for approval. Once materials are received, the test administrator will use the embedded braille instructions in the tables and supports in the Paper Administration Guide to provide access to the content and accommodations in the specific test being administered. The guide will provide the following information: picture descriptions of content and language support images and graphics (e.g., charts, tables, graphs) that may be reproduced for accessibility (e.g., brailling graphics, pairing graphics with tactile symbols, texts, or objects, enlarging or projecting).

Deaf or hard-of-hearing students eligible for oral/signed administrations and content and language supports need to take STAAR online to access these embedded supports. However, since these students are unable to access the text-to-speech function, a signed administration is allowed for those parts of the test that can be read aloud. ASL videos are offered as an online option for a signed administration. ASL videos allow a student to independently select and change the level of signing support during the test administration. However, it is important to note that ASL videos are only available for test questions and revising passages in English, and are not offered on Spanish tests or for content and language supports (i.e., pop-ups and rollovers). In these instances, the test administrator may sign test content in the same way as they do for paper tests. Test administrators should be trained using the Oral/Signed Administration Guidelines and also read the specific guidelines for signing test content included in the General Instructions for Administering State Assessments to Students Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing document. Both of these documents are located on TEA's Accommodation Resources webpage. In addition, proctor codes will be available to district testing coordinators in the Assessment Management System to download and distribute to test administrators providing a signed administration of an online STAAR test.

Planning for Testing

Careful review of the state accessibility policy is required so that students receive only those accessibility features and designated supports that are allowed or approved by TEA for use on state assessments. Testing coordinators, test administrators, and other campus personnel involved in state testing must consider the following questions related to ensuring accessibility for students on test day.

- Which students receive accessibility features or designated supports on test day?
- What special arrangements need to be considered for students who will use accessibility features and designated supports on test day? For example, ensuring that calculators and other equipment have sufficient batteries or choosing separate settings for students who use certain supports requires advance planning.
- What staff training is needed to properly provide certain designated supports? For instance, transcribing a student's response onto an answer document or providing an oral/signed administration of a paper test requires advance training.
- What campus and district procedures are in place to ensure test security, especially if the student is using technology as a support? Please refer to the Technology Guidelines page in the Policy Highlights section of the *Coordinator Resources*.
- What procedure is in place and who is responsible for recording designated supports on the answer document or in the Assessment Management System for online tests?
- Have students taking STAAR online had the opportunity to practice interacting with the tools and features in the online testing system? It is important that students have used the online tutorials and released tests to become familiar with selecting answers, using the online tools, moving through the test, submitting the test, etc.
- What special arrangements need to be considered for students taking different versions of STAAR with different designated supports? For example, should students taking STAAR online without designated supports be grouped with students taking STAAR online with designated supports? Should students taking STAAR on paper and STAAR online be grouped together?
- Are computers prepared for online testing according to the *STAAR Online Testing Platform Technology Guide* available online at www.TexasAssessment.com/technology/?
- If your students are using the refreshable braille embedded online support, are the computers prepared for online testing according to the *STAAR Online Testing Platform Technology Guide* available online at www.TexasAssessment.com/technology/?

For additional information, contact the TEA's Student Assessment Division at 512-463-9536 or assessment.specialpopulations@tea.texas.gov.

NOTES

STAAR Released Tests

Online Testing Technology